EVERY OTHER SUNDAY

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"THREE KINGS OF ORIENT."

KITTY'S CHRISTMAS LIST.

BY MISS E. O. WHITE.

"JACK!"

"Kitty!"

"My dearest brother, it is great fun living with you, and I feel almost as if I were keeping house for you, being the only boarders at Miss Pierce's as we are; but just at Christmas-time it 's a trifle lonely so far away from the rest of the family, and so — so — "

"So you expect me to give you a better present than usual; that 's what you are driving at, is n't it, Kitty?" Jack asked, with a smile.

"Yes, dear; and there are so many things that I want this Christmas, — more than ever before, for I 'm fourteen now. You 've been grown up so long that you 've forgotten how one feels when one is fourteen, and how many wants one has. I've made out my list and pinned it on the door in the dining-room, so that you can see it every day at breakfast and dinner, and be making up your mind what thing or things to get; and dinner is ready now," she added suggestively.

Jack gave one wistful glance at his newspaper, and then followed his sister with a resigned air into the other room. He had been familiar with Kitty's lists for a long series of years.

"It 's horribly difficult, this Christmas-present business," he said.

"Jack! it can't be anything but fun. If I had plenty of money I should not have any trouble in spending it."

"If I were a millionnaire, so that I could supply all your wants, it would be easy enough," Jack continued; "but as it is, I have to choose, and that 's the hard part."

He ran his eye over her list, which stood as follows: —

WANTED.

Some cologne, in a pretty bottle.

A Russia-leather portfolio, with "K. M. C." on it in silver letters.

A pair of red shoes for dancing-school.

The Sistine Madonna, framed.

A bottle of olives.

A beaver muff.

A cover for my bureau.

A gold lace-pin with a pretty head to it.

A handkerchief-case made out of ribbon and lace, and soft and fluffy.

A glove-case, ditto.

An illustrated book (any books will be acceptable).

Some handkerchiefs with a "K" embroidered in the corner.

Some Jacqueminot roses.

Some crèpe handkerchiefs, pink and blue.

Bric-à-brac for my room.

A ring.

"There are a few more things that I want," Kitty observed tranquilly, "but I can't think of them now; perhaps they will come to me in time."

"Good heavens! I hope not," Jack cried, aghast. "I don't know how I can ever decide what to give you, as it is. You ought to star the things you want most, Kitty, — the way Bædeker in his guide-books stars what is best worth seeing, — and then give a double star to the most important one of all. How do you expect a poor fellow to choose right out of such chaos, with the Sistine Madonna between red shoes and a bottle of olives, and — "

"But the trouble is I have n't the faintest idea what I do want most," broke in Kitty. "One thing is just as important as another; they are all double starred."

"The one I choose will be sure to be ill starred," remarked Jack. "For instance, last year I spent two days tearing about from shop to shop gravely inspecting French dolls, until I felt as if I had entered my second childhood; and when at last I secured a peerless damsel, you suddenly discovered that you were too old to play with dolls, and would have liked — "

"Jack! that was two years ago; I was n't such a baby last year."

"Oh! It was last year, then, that I gave you the little rocking-chair, and found that you would have preferred a new pair of skates."

"Jack, how unkind of you to bring up the past!"

"So on your birthday I gave you the skates, and found — "

"You make me seem very ungrateful; but this year I am older and more sensible. Oh, dear! I wish Christmas did n't go so quickly; I wish the fun could be made to last over."

Jack smiled. He had suddenly thought of a plan by which Christmas could be "made to last over," and he himself saved the trouble of deciding among his sister's multifarious wants.

On Christmas morning before it was light, Kitty began to feel eagerly in her stocking. First she found a box of candy and a pink crèpe handkerchief from Miss Pierce. The box from home had not yet arrived, so she could not expect to find anything more excepting Jack's present. But where was his present? Down in the very toe of the stocking she discovered a tiny, hard, round thing. She jumped up and lighted the gas. It was — oh, how joyful! — it was a ten-dollar gold piece. She had never before had so much money to spend just as she liked. "Dear, delightful Jack!" She went joyfully about the house all day. "Christmas this year is only the beginning of the fun," she thought; "the best part of it will come later, when I go to buy my present."

As soon as school was over the next day, she sallied forth with the ten dollars in her purse and a happy light in her eyes. She walked down Park Street and through Winter Street to Washington Street, and then back again through West Street, looking into every shop-window that she passed.

Her attention was first attracted by a photograph of the Sistine Madonna.

"How nice it would be to have that!" she thought. "I should like to put Jack's money into something permanent; and it has such a pretty frame, too."

She went into the print-shop and asked the price. It was just ten dollars. She walked out again to consider.

"Lovely little gold piece," she said, "how happy you make me, for I can have that Madonna just as well as not. But, after all, do I want it so very much? I can stop here every day on the way from school to look at it; if I get the Madonna I can't get a gold lace-pin, or any red shoes, or — What a lovely handkerchief-case that is in Whitney's window, pale pink, just my color, with lace on the ends!" She found that it cost three dollars.

"But, after all," she thought, "it is foolish to put any of my money into a handkerchief-case when I can make one myself."

That evening, when Jack came home from his business, he found Kitty with the scissors in her hand, and a fluffy pile of lace and pink silk in front of her.

"Ho, ho! so you 've bought your present," he said.

"No, Jack, I 'm making a handkerchief-case out of some old things I had. I think it 's more interesting and economical to make things when you can, and the fun lasts all the longer. I hope you realize how much pleasure you are giving me. I suppose you feel the way I did when the little grimy Maggie O'Brien hugged the doll Miss Pierce and I gave her, — only ever so much more so. Jack, I truly believe there is no fun in the world equal to having ten dollars to spend just as you like. I walk the streets and think that anything I see can be mine. It is like having Fortunatus' purse."

The next day Kitty again proceeded to the shopping quarter of the city. After a long search she found a beaver muff that entirely came up to her ideal. She paused doubtfully before the clerk who was showing it to her.

"I think I will take it," she hesitated. "How thick and soft the fur is!"

"It will last a long time, Miss," he said persuasively. "You must be sure to do it up in camphor in summer, to protect it from moths."

Moths, true! They were a possibility that one had to consider in connection with beaver fur. Why had the clerk suggested them? How terrible it would be if Jack's beautiful present should be devoured by hungry moths! No, even a fur muff was not a sufficiently permanent investment for his money.

"After all, my old astrachan muff is plenty good enough to wear all winter," she thought, with a little sigh.

The next time that Kitty went on a shopping expedition, she returned with the same unsatisfactory results. She had seen some red shoes that she wanted, some books, and a glove-case; but she concluded that it would be foolish to put any of Jack's money into red shoes, which would be danced out, and she decided to take the books out of the library and to make the glove-case.

"I will wait until after the 1st of January, when things are marked down," she thought, "and then I 'll make a business of getting my present."

After New Year's, Kitty haunted all the principal jeweller's shops, and found three pins and four rings that she wanted equally. She studied the subject carefully for some days, and at last decided that as pins go out of fashion, it would be nicer to get a ring, and she finally chose one with an amethyst set in it.

"It does n't seem sentimental exactly to get a ring and have it marked 'K. M. C., from her dear brother, J. P. C., Christmas, 18—,' when Jack had n't the faintest idea of giving me one. I think, on the whole, I would rather wait for a ring until he gives me one of his own accord. Oh, dear! and I'm losing all the skating, because I spend all my time looking in at shop-windows."

"Have you got your present, Kitty?" Jack asked carelessly that evening. He had been very considerate; it was a fortnight since he had last broached the subject.

"No," she said wearily, "and I begin to think it must be rather nice to be very poor like little Maggie O'Brien. I 'm sick of shops, and I 'm going to take a vacation. You need n't smile in that provoking way; after the skating has gone I am truly going to get my present."

But almost as soon as the skating was over, the Easter vacation came, and Kitty went out of town to spend it with some friends, and after her return the weather grew so mild that she could not bear to stay shut up in city streets.

Miss Pierce organized expeditions into the country, which her young charge gladly joined.

One day Kitty brought back from one of these excursions a huge bunch of daisies and clover and buttercups.

"See, dear!" she said, holding up the flowers before Jack, "are n't they lovely! Look at them! Smell of them! They are all for you. How I wish you could have been with us and seen the fresh green grass and these lovely things sprinkled through it, while a robin had perched on a bush near by, and was singing about it all! You know I always carry my gold piece in my pocket in case at any minute I should want to spend it; but to-day I kept thinking, 'You enchanting things, I can't buy you with my ten dollars, unless you count horse-car fares, — which are necessary, so I don't have to pay for them myself.' I'm not going to bother my head any more about shops until the autumn, and then I will settle down to getting my present."

It was no easier, however, when she was once more back at school after the long summer vacation; October and November passed, and December found her still undecided as to the way in which to spend her gold piece.

The day before Christmas she said again, —

"Jack!"

"Kitty!"

"Here is the ten dollars that you gave me last Christmas. Will you please put it in the bank?"

Jack laughed. "Supposing I give it to you again this year," he said; "that will be a very economical plan for me, and —"

"No, Jack, whatever you do, don't give me money. I've learned one lesson, and that is to be grateful for whatever you give me without wishing it were something else, for it's such a blessing to be spared the trouble of deciding. It somehow seems as if most things were n't important when you can have them just as well as not. Then there are so many things one can make one's self, and so many things one can do without —"

"Suppose we do without Christmas altogether," suggested Jack; but Kitty did not agree to that. And indeed it must be confessed that she was in need of all the consolation that she could get, for the week before she had come down with the measles.

"It 's bad enough to have the measles at any time," she observed to her brother, "but dreadful at Christmas; and it 's almost more aggravating to have them mildly, and be nearly well enough to go out. It 's so provoking to lose dancing-school and the Thatchers' Christmas Eve party, and I'm so disappointed not to be able to go round with Miss Pierce to take presents to her poor children. That is such fun. You remember the dear little black-eyed, curly-haired Maggie O'Brien, who was here to dine on Thanksgiving Day? I had made her such a pretty scrap-book, and I did so want to see her when she got it."

"It's a shame, Kitty, and if I had n't a part in the Thatchers' Christmas pantomime, I would stay at home and console you."

When Jack came back from the party, he found his sister standing by the mantelpiece surveying an ornament that she had placed there.

"What on earth is that?" he asked in astonishment.

"It is a small toy woolly lamb," she replied calmly. "It has real wool, and it is one of the nicest things I ever had. Don't look at me as if you thought I had gone crazy, but sit down and I'll tell you all about it."

Jack took up the small animal and examined it critically.

"There is something wrong about its anatomy," he observed gravely.

"Never mind about its anatomy, Jack, so long as its heart is in the right place. You had hardly gone out of the house when Mrs. O'Brien came to bring back our washing, and asked to see me, and she gave me the little object that you are holding now. 'And shure, Miss Katie,' she said, 'when Maggie heard you 'd got the measles, she was so sorry for yees that she wanted me to give you this little baa-lamb, that she 'd just had given to her. She 'd been hugging the little thing all day, and she 'd niver had anything she 'd liked so well. "Shure and Miss Katie won't care for your baa-lamb," says I. "Shure and she will," says she; and I thought, "Maybe yer right, for Miss Katie always knows a good thing when she sees it."' Jack, I could n't help crying to think of that dear little thing, who has hardly ever had any playthings at all, giving me her precious lamb."

Kitty's voice become unsteady at the recollection; then after a moment she said brightly: "I never expected to have a woolly lamb, Jack; it was n't on my list. I don't think I shall make out any more lists; I think the unexpected things are the nicest. After all, dear, I don't think it 's so much what we have, that makes us happy, as the way in which it is given."

Jack was still inspecting the lamb with a sober face. Perhaps if he had not been so very grown up he would have cried too.

"I am glad you feel in that way, Kitty," he said lightly, "for I've planned giving you a bottle of olives this Christmas. It is n't much of a present, but the sentiment with which it is given will make it valuable."

"I know that it is n't a bottle of olives," said Kitty, gayly; "but even if it were I think I should be content."

CHRISTKINDCHEN.

FROM "JUVENILIA," BY VERNON LEE.

At the bottom of my heart I believe in it still, — in that dear little child with tiny, trotting feet beneath its nightgown, carrying the green fir-tree loaded with gilt nuts, garlands of glass beads, and innumerable tapers, the yellow light of which merges in the pale gold of the halo surrounding the little blond head. I have a belief in it still, that Baby Christ (Christkindchen, as I was taught to call it by my German nurses), who brings presents to good little children, — golden apples, gingerbread wrapped in silver foil, strung-up dolls, boxes of leaden soldiers, — doubtless because it remembers, up there in heaven, how pleased it was when the dear Kings from the East, the nice grandpapa with the snow-white beard, the fair-haired prince who looked like a young lady, and the good Ethiopian smiling with all his thirty-six strong white teeth, brought to the stable at Bethlehem the embroidered garments, the jars of myrrh, the caskets full of frankincense. . . .

Towards Christmas there was always snow. I used to watch it till my head span, falling in solid flakes, close together and yet each separate, in the white air, always slanting as they came down, as if sown by invisible sowers; the explanation being, as I was informed by my nurse, that the miller and the baker were quarrelling in heaven. On the bank of the ponds the skaters were beginning cautiously to try the ice, putting down gingerly one foot, then the other, on that crackling, steely polish, thinly powdered with white frost; or pitching stones which shattered the middle of the pond, shivering the ice that rebounded in bluish fragments, and sending up a spurt of pale-blue water. On the puddles and the gutters the street boys were sliding in long rows, balancing themselves with their upraised, green-gloved paws. Every now and then came the tinkle of bells, and a sledge passed, rapid and silent like a shadow. There was an unusual splendor in the shop-windows of that sleepy German town, particularly the stationers' and grocers', on account of the sheets of colored tissue paper, the gold leaf for gilding the nuts and apples, the strings of blue and red glass beads, the packets of delicately tinted tapers, the candies as hard as quartz, the dried figs and prunes, all to be fastened to the Christmas-trees. Every morning there was in the market-place a perfect little wood of dwarf fir-trees, — bright green spruce, hard as a blacking-brush. All of which things filled my head with confused and delightful expectations.

But there was something more fascinating than any shop-window done up for Christmas; more fascinating even than the suggestion, perhaps a trifle too obvious and material, of those fir-trees in the market-place. In various parts of the town, but more especially within the dark archway of an old tower surrounded by butchers' shops, there were wooden trestles, on which were exhibited rows and rows of wooden Christmas lambs. If ever any animal, born of the fancy of man, has had a power over my mind, it has been neither the dragon, nor the unicorn, nor the rok of the "Arabian Nights," nor the lamia, nor the centaur, nor the snark, — although I loved them all, — but the white-sugar pink-eyed rabbit, who lays the Easter eggs, and this particular little Christmas lamb. I can see them now, the beloved creatures, in files on the trestles under the old clock-tower; they were twice as long as a child's hand, with a barrel-shaped paunch of thick wool, white and curly, and tied round with strips of red and gold paper; four very short toothpicks served for legs, and they had beautiful, majestic Roman noses. I can't say wherein consisted the peculiar and exquisite grace, the fascination of those fantastic creatures. Perhaps it was the solid way in which they straddled on those toothpick legs, and the deep, black, fixed stare of the beady eyes on either side of that Roman nose. Certain it is that I was so entranced that my nurse always had to drag me violently along whenever we passed near that clock-tower; and I am by no means sure that even now, were I ever to pass that spot at Christmas-time, a little compulsion would not be advisable on the part of my companions. . . .

Enough has been said, perhaps too much, of all that Christkindchen did for me in those far-distant German days. When I was just issuing out of childhood, it brought me a present more magnificent than any other; perhaps because, as I was about to quit the class, — that of the little ones, with which Christkindchen has most dealings, — it thought it kind to send me away with a big *consolation prize*. This prize, this wonderful Christmas-box, received by me when I was twelve, consisted in a winter passed in Rome. . . .

(*Continued on page* 62.)

For Youngest Readers.

A CHRISTMAS BOX.

BY LUCY FLORENCE YOUNG.

"I DO hope some one will give me a drum on Christmas," said Fred, as he poked the open fire and made the bright sitting-room even more cheerful than before. "I have wanted one so long!"

"I want a new doll," said Alice.

"Why, you have about a dozen now," interrupted Will.

"I know it," answered Alice, "but they are all worn out. I want a new one with dark eyes and real hair, — one that can open and shut her eyes. I want her to have three new dresses and lots of underclothes, and a bureau to put them in, and a trunk, and a parasol — "

"Time 's up!" shouted Will. "Santa Claus will be frightened if you tell him any more. Now, I want a football, a knife, a pair of skates, another year of 'St. Nicholas Magazine,' and a — "

"Oh," laughed Alice, "your wants are as many as mine! Come, Nell, what do you want?" and Alice turned towards the youngest of the group, who was rolling on the floor with a little black kitten.

"A new collar for my kitty," answered Nell, quickly sitting up, "and a new set of dishes, and a play-house with a real stove to light a fire in."

"My! you 'll set the house on fire, Nell," put in Fred. "I want a train of cars and a pair of skates, but a drum more than anything;" and Fred began rub-a-dub-dub on the arm of his chair, which was suddenly interrupted by a shout of welcome as mamma opened the door.

"Oh, we are so glad you 've come, mamma! We were having such a nice time telling what we want for Christmas! What do you hope Santa Claus will bring you?" asked Will.

"Were you talking of only what you hope to receive, and not at all of what you are going to give to others?" asked mamma, as she handed her wraps to Alice.

"Oh, we don't tell what we shall give to one another!" answered Fred, quickly.

"I know what I shall make for you and for papa," said Alice, with a satisfied air.

"Very well, my dears," said mamma. "But don't you think it would be pleasant to do something to make some one happy whom you have no reason to suppose will give you a present, — some poor child who will perhaps have no Christmas gift at all?"

"Yes, I do," answered Will, promptly; "but what can we do? We have so little money."

"That is true," answered mamma. "I know you have all had to earn the little money you have; but there are some children who have even less than you do, and you might perhaps be able to add a little to their Christmas. There is Hugh McLin, the little boy Aunty told you she met last summer in the prairie town. I don't believe he will have many presents."

"I can send him my horse without any tail, and the broken tipcart," said Fred, quickly.

"I will send Mehitable Jane to his sister. She has only one arm, and I don't care much for her," said Alice.

"He can have my old skates, for I expect a new pair," added Will.

"You are all very generous," said mamma, smiling. "You are very willing to give away what you don't care for yourselves. That does not sound to me like the true spirit of Christmas. When I think of the holy Christ-child whose birth the day celebrates, who spent his life doing good, I think we ought to be willing to give up something to help make a bright day for some of God's little ones;" and mamma's voice grew low and sweet, while the children's faces became thoughtful.

"But," said Alice, breaking the silence, "if we give our money we can't buy anything for each other. You surely don't want us to leave out one another?"

"No. I don't know yet what you can give up. We will think about it. I must see to supper now. I have it," she added, stopping on the threshold. "I know papa spends considerable money for trinkets for our tree and for candy. Suppose you do without the tree and candy, and ask papa to give you the money to send a box to Hugh and his brothers and sisters."

A chorus of "Oh-h-h!" arose, which showed *that* would be a real sacrifice; and then the room became so quiet that the tick-tack, tick-tack, of the tall clock could be heard.

Fred was the first to speak. "I love candy, but I 'll do it. I guess that boy don't have any, for Aunty said there was only one store in the town."

"All right. I'm willing. What do you say, girls?" asked Will.

"We can hang up our stockings instead of having a tree, and it won't hurt us to miss the candy," said Alice.

"There 's papa," exclaimed Nell, as the hall door opened. "Come, we 'll ask him now."

Papa entered heartily into their plan, and for the next week every child was busy. The horse received a new tail, the cart was mended, Mehitable Jane had a new arm and many new dresses. Their friends got interested and helped them. The big folks did their share; and well-mended clothes, with warm mittens and hats and caps, were added. When all was ready papa brought home the candy. The children looked wistfully at it, but no one offered to touch any. Some little notes were written and tucked in between the toys, and papa nailed up the box.

And now, where did the box go? It travelled across all the Northwestern States, across the Territory of Dakota, and stopped at a little prairie town in Montana. Here, in a log house at the end of the town, lives Hugh McLin. When he steps out of his home, he sees the mountains far off in the distance to the north, but in every other direction only one boundless prairie. Hugh is never tired of looking at it, so green in its summer dress, and changing, as the grass fades and dries in the fall, to soft red and brown. In winter all is one vast tract of snow, and Hugh misses the trains which come through so seldom; but he thinks the prairie is just as beautiful in its solemn whiteness and silence. At this season the one-story houses are almost buried in the snow. But the road is soon broken out that leads to the only store in town, before which there is a line of hitching-posts; and here Hugh can always see some mustang pony waiting for its rider. Hugh can ride horseback himself; but he never has a coast, for there are no hills in this region; nor has he ever seen a real tree, — much less a Christmas-tree.

But he knows of Santa Claus; and when that Christmas Eve there comes a knock at the door, and a man all white with snow rolls in a box directed in his name, he is sure he has seen St. Nicholas.

A terrible storm has set in, but he knows nothing about it. The cracks and spaces between the logs are closely filled in with mud, the walls inside are covered with cotton cloth, there is a warm fire in the stove, and Hugh is happy. Santa Claus has sent him a whole Christmas box, — a thing he never had before or expected to have.

His sisters and brothers, mother and father, crowd around to see the box opened, and then — oh, if the little children away back in Massachusetts could have seen the happiness they had given! The toys are taken out, and such cries of delight as arise! No child thinks of claiming this or that, but all are enjoyed together. Mehitable Jane never had so many kisses, or that horse such loving pats. The warm clothes are tried on, and the father and mother thank God in their hearts for the kind hands that have helped them clothe their little ones for the long hard winter. The letters pass round, and the candy is enjoyed by every child in the town; for the next morning Hugh digs his way to every door, and every child in the little hamlet is invited to share his pleasure.

And so the little seed of self-sacrifice, started in the hearts of the little children in Massachusetts, grew and grew, until it spread its branches half across the continent, and dropped its sweet fruit of peace and good-will into the lap of every child in that prairie town of Montana.

"THE FIRST CHRISTMAS MORN."

HOW FRED EARNED HIS CHRISTMAS MONEY.

BY G. D. P.

FRED lives in a prairie town in the great Territory of Dakota. If you had gone out to see him this summer, after he had shown you the little pony and the hens he keeps, I think he would have taken you down to the Park, and up to the bluff on the other side of the river. I feel quite sure he would do this, first, because that is where all the residents of Valley City take their guests, and in the next place, because he would want to show you a certain piece of land that lies that way.

"Come," Fred would say, "let's go down to the Park;" and then you would both run down the hill (and it is really quite a hill), through the main street of the town, and across the railroad track towards the trees you can see all the way, which hide the river from view. On the way down, he would say, "Would n't you like to see my potatoes?" and then, without waiting for an answer, he would dart off to the right, while you followed as fast as you could, running through the edge of the grove of oaks and cottonwoods, till you came to an open place by the river. There you would see what Fred had really meant to show you when he had said, "Let 's go down to the Park."

I did not go to Valley City until the fall, so I did not see what you would have seen, — a nicely hoed potato-patch, quite white with blossoms which swayed in the soft breeze that seems always to blow on the prairie. While you were admiring the potatoes Fred would tell you something about them.

"This is my father's land," he would very likely say, "but he lets me have the use of it. I bought the potatoes myself. (Father lent me the money, of course, but I mean to pay it back when I sell my potatoes in the fall.) And I 've done all the work except the ploughing. I cut up the potatoes after school at night and brought them down here myself, and one Saturday Ole came down with the horses and plough, and ploughed up the land for me. I managed the planting first-rate, — just followed the plough and dropped the potatoes into the furrow before the sod fell over and covered them. 'T was real fun, but I think I 've enjoyed the hoeing more. You see, I get up in the morning before breakfast and come down here and work. Oh, you don't know how lovely it is in the morning, — so still down here by the river, and the sky and prairie all red from the rising sun! I never knew before how lovely the sunrise was. Suppose we get up early to-morrow morning and come down. There won't be any hoeing to do, but you can see the sun rise. Sometimes the mist lies on the river and Park in great white patches that disappear gradually as the sun reaches them, and very often you can see a mirage, — town, city, upside down perhaps —" And here, I think, Fred would stop quite out of breath, with flushed face and sparkling eyes, and you would agree to get up early the next morning to see all these wonders. Then Fred would remember that he had n't shown you the Park, and while you retraced your steps he would tell you what a mirage was, if you did n't know, — a wonderful picture in the air, — and about the picnics held in the Park all through the summer, and what games the boys played there.

When you got into the Park (which you would do without going through any gate), you would find yourself merely in a grove of the same oaks and cottonwoods you passed through to see Fred's potatoes. There would be no flower-beds, and, I am sorry to say, very little turf. The trees grow strangely twisted there, too, and not very high; but the shade in summer must be refreshing, and the ground is well covered with various coarse weeds which mixed with the scanty grass make a green carpet. Fred would take you over the winding roads, and show you where the tables are set and the hammocks swung, when the crowds come in the cars for their picnics. He would lead you by the foot-paths over the two or three rustic bridges that span the river, and then you would notice what a curve the stream makes there, almost returning upon itself, and you would understand how there came to be such a wood in the midst of that great Dakota prairie.

But I think you would like the bluff better than the Park, — at least I did. Quite a climb you would find it, for it rises surely sixty or seventy feet, and just by the Park very abruptly. You and Fred would follow the drive-way across the wider bridge, and ascend the bluff from the lower side; and when you got up there, Fred would feel, and you would too, that he was showing you the whole world. I think at first you would see nothing but the prairie, — the beautiful, great prairie, with its variegated covering of grass and grain. All shades of green it would seem to you, with patches of buff where the wheat was beginning to ripen, and dots of color made by close-growing flowering weeds. In every direction it stretches away to the horizon where sky and prairie meet; and it is so great that you think of the desert as you have imagined it, or the sea as you have seen it, and Valley City, with its church-spires and pleasant homes, its Park and river, seems like an oasis or an island in its midst. Then you would come down, go through the Park again, and perhaps find the boys outside of the schoolhouse playing ball; and there I shall leave you while I tell those who can't go to see Fred how it happened that he went into the potato business.

Last Christmas there were several things Fred wanted very much to get for Christmas gifts, that his father felt were more than he could afford. He wanted to buy a certain book for sister May, and a new inkstand for his father; and though he understood that for all the family to expect his father to pay for their Christmas gifts made Christmas an expensive festival to him, and that they ought to keep their desires within bounds, his disappointment was none the less great. May could purchase material for a small sum, and with her deft fingers make something very pretty and acceptable, — but what could a boy do? He thought about it a good deal, and finally decided that a boy could earn money even if he was but ten years old, and resolved to be that sort of boy.

Then it was necessary to find something to do, and it was already nearly spring when it occurred to him to ask his father for the use of some of his land, and to raise potatoes on it. He thought he could surely do that.

His father consented to all his proposals, without much faith in Fred's persistency, but very willing to see what the boy would do. He never reminded him of his work, nor took any apparent interest in the matter, leaving Fred to be his own master; but the result showed how well a boy does when he is really in earnest.

It was the last of September when I visited Valley City. The prairie had taken on its fall hues, — crimson and red from the changing leaves of the low weeds, yellow and brown from the ripened grain and grasses. There were miles of acres where the wheat stood in bundles waiting for the thresher, other miles where the stubble stood stiff waiting for the fall ploughing, and the great cocks of wheat stood high above the low farmhouses near which it was stacked. On every side long pennons of smoke showed where the steam-threshers were at work; and the wind, though still soft, blew cool enough for warm outside wraps. I did not go down to see Fred's potatoes, because they were all dug and sold; but his father took me up to the bluff to show me "all the world," and told me about them.

How many bushels do you suppose Fred's potato-patch yielded? He planted just one bushel and he dug *thirty-two*, — more than "thirty-fold" increase! He paid, I believe, seventy-five cents for the bushel he planted, and sold his thirty-two bushels at fifty cents a bushel. How much did he make? I leave you to work out the problem yourself, and to imagine the pride and pleasure Fred will feel at Christmas time when he buys his Christmas gifts with his own money.

You will all want to know what he gets with the money, and whether he means to raise potatoes another year. I should like to know myself, and I wish Fred would write and tell us. Perhaps he will.

CHRISTKINDCHEN.

(*Continued from page* 59.)

Christmas came on; or rather, Advent. . . . The pork-shops began to be hung with heavy garlands of hams and sausages, replacing flowers among the branches of bay, and the ribbons and gilt paper. And every morning there rose to my bed, awaking me from some dream of shepherds and kings from the East, the melancholy quavering of the fife, the monotonous drone of the bag-pipe. It seemed as if, little by little, all this prosy, every-day world were turning into a confused fairy-tale, heard half-way between sleeping and awake.

Then the festivities began. I remember the morning when, in the midst of jangling of bells and banging of artillery, they waked me up by candle-light, and helped me into black clothes belonging to my elders (to wear mourning seemed to me highly dignified), and then carried me, crushed in a two-seat cab, to St. Peter's, where I waited for hours among the knees of veiled and black-dressed ladies, — hours that seemed an endless dream under this immense cupola, shimmering blue and white and gold, where the sunbeams, through a haze of incense, struck upon the huge golden letters, "Tu es Petrus." Endless, endless; until at last there echoed through the vastness of the place the quavering notes of the singers, the shrill blast of the trumpets; and there became visible, moving above the heads, above the sheen of the bayonets and the halberds, the great fans of ostrich-feathers, the golden tassels of the gently swaying throne, the white splendor of the pontifical robes and jewels. The trumpets shrilled through the cupola; the incense rose in great blue wreaths. I thought of King Solomon when as (I had read in the "Arabian Nights") he passed in review the legions of angels, of djins, and of fairies, obedient to the power of his ring.

In old days there were angels who came and took men by the hand and led them away from the city of destruction. We see no white-winged angels now; but yet men are led away from threatening destruction. A hand is put into theirs which leads them forth gently towards a calm and bright land, so that they look no more backward; and the hand may be a little child's. — *George Eliot.*

THE CARRIER PIGEONS OF NOTRE DAME

BY MRS. HENRIETTE CUSHING.

IN the beautiful belfry of the still more beautiful church which the children of Paris call the Church of Our Lady there lived a pair of cripples among the numerous white-winged company that made a home in the heights of the graceful twin towers far above the bustle and noise of the great city. One had a broken pinion, and the other had lost a leg. During the war between France and Prussia they had been used to carry messages over the enemy's lines when Paris was in a state of siege, and belonged to a band of trained pigeons owned by the Government. But these faithful messengers had braved the enemy once too often, and had been shot and wounded while performing their duty. As they fell suffering and bleeding on the grass in the little Park in the neighborhood of the church, no one heeded them. There was little loitering in pleasant places in those sad days. Every one went steadily on from place to place, as duty called them.

The broken wing took long to heal, and flying was out of the question; but the devoted mate who still could fly painfully, brought food and tenderly nursed his broken-winged companion. They saw other pigeons flying in and out of the belfry not far away; and they at last, flying better each day as their wounds healed, reached the safe retreat, and joined the great, joyous company who made their home in the beautiful church towers. They made daily pilgrimages for food, going as far as their wings would carry them, and began to forget to long for their old home, since one was too crippled to hope to reach it and the other would not forsake his mate. They made many friends in the neighborhood of the church among the rich and the poor; for to them there was but one distinction, and that was between the people who were kind and those who were cruel.

Perhaps it was sympathy which made little lame Paul so kind to them that they visited him oftener than any other friend they had, and scarcely a day passed that they did not come to his window. Paul lived in the top-story of a large house, from which he could see the grand towers of the Church of Our Lady, and for many months together he could not leave his room.

At first it was the maimed pigeon who came alone, and whom Paul fed on the little balcony outside his window, where a few bright blossoming plants made a bit of a garden. Not long after this visit Paul saw that his friend had brought another pigeon, who could only fly painfully from one story to another, resting by the balconies outside the windows. The two cripples — one with a trailing pinion, the other with but one leg — made Paul feel that his repining and impatience at his inability to play and run about with the other boys were something to be ashamed of. Always cheerful and happy, braving storms and wind, the two courageous birds came every morning to greet their brother in misfortune.

The time of all the year when Paul wished to be well and go about to look in the gay shop-windows, filled with beautiful gifts for the greatest *fête* of the year — the blessed Birthday — was near. There were miles of shops along the broad boulevards, where crowds of children's bright faces peered joyously, wondering which of the multitudes of beautiful gifts would be theirs. It was only a year ago that Paul had been among that happy crowd devouring with eager eyes all the new wonders and surprises which the makers of toys had invented for the Christmas *fête*. Now he must stay indoors from morning until night, thinking of the pleasures which others enjoyed instead of himself.

The morning of Christmas came, full of the glory of the bright sunshine and happiness. Peace had been declared, and after months of fasting and anxieties a time of calm and double rejoicing was at hand. Paul had set his shoes outside his door to catch the gifts of the good fairy, and on the balcony he had a pair of his large boots filled with grain and bread-crumbs for his friends the lame pigeons, who would come for their Christmas feast and find themselves well remembered on this glorious festival. One by one Paul took out his gifts; his shoes could not hold them all, so bountifully had he been loaded down with good things. There was, first of all, the beautiful waxen Christ-child with gauze-like wings and golden curls, such as every child in France hopes to find in his Christmas shoes on that *fête* day. Then to entertain him for many a day were wonderful mechanical toys which seemed little short of miraculous in the wonders they performed. All day long Paul had been perfectly happy, and too occupied with his gifts to think of his pigeons and the bountiful feast he had provided for them. The lights of the great city were beginning to twinkle before he asked to have the window opened that he might see if his cripples had taken their gifts out of his shoes on the balcony. Crawling on his hands and knees, Paul reached out and drew in his boots. One was nearly empty, but in the other was the well-known form of one of his pets nestling in the protecting warmth of the stout leather shoe. Paul was speechless with delight, for he had never had his pigeons in his hand before. As he tried to take it gently from its hiding-place he saw that its eyes were dim and that its head drooped. It was quite lively for a minute fluttering into the room, but dropped exhausted on the floor with a loud "Coo" the next minute. The little cripple was dead. His beautiful feathers were draggled with mud, — he had been unable to plume himself perhaps for many days; but he did not forget his little friend in misfortune. With tears in his eyes Paul tenderly laid the bird down, and smoothed his ruffled feathers with his thin white hand, grown so unlike the sturdy little hand that used to play ball in the Park. A bit of a packet, blood-stained and covered with dirt, was tied under the trailing wing. Paul unfastened it, and read, in letters so blotted and indistinct as to be hard to make out, one word, "Courage." "It was his Christmas gift to me," said Paul softly, as he stroked the pigeon once again. The carrier had delivered his message, after all, to one who perhaps needed it more than he for whom it was written.

FILL thy heart with ever-active love, —
Love for the wicked as in sin he lies,
Love for thy brother here, thy God above;
Fear nothing ill; 't will vanish in its day;
Live for the good, taking the ill thou must.
Toil with thy might, with manly labor pray;
Living and loving, learn thy God to trust,
And He will pour upon thy soul the blessings of the just.

Theodore Parker.

THREE KINGS OF ORIENT.

[See picture on p. 57.]

BY KATE L. BROWN.

Together.

WE have travelled from afar,
We have crossed the desert sand,
We have followed one bright Star
Over leagues of weary land.

MOVE, bright Star, and do not stay
Till thou shinest o'er his cot;
Never shall our feet delay
Till we reach the sacred spot.

WE have gifts both fine and rare,
Costly offerings we bring;
Nothing were too rich and rare
For our gracious little King.

First King.

A crown of jewels bright
Set upon his baby brow:
He indeed is Love's true Lord;
Heaven and earth proclaim it now.

Second King.

A robe of richest dyes
Round the lovely Infant fling;
All the tender care of men
Clothes him as befits a king.

Third King.

I BRING frankincense and gums,
Precious spices, myrrh, and gold;
Never shall our care be vain,
Never shall the tale grow old.

The Three together.

MOVE, sweet Star, in radiant splendor,
Hasten in the Christmas morn;
Christ is come to lead us homeward,
Christ in Bethlehem is born.

CHRISTMAS BELLS.

BY CARO A. DUGAN.

O BELLS! sweet bells! across the years
Half gay, half sad, your chiming:
Old joys ye tell; old sorrows swell
Throughout your tender rhyming.

O merry bells! this Christmas day
How loud and clear your ringing!
Such love and mirth o'er all the earth
Your lusty voices flinging!

O happy bells! through coming years,
We hear in your glad sending
The message still of peace, good-will, —
All jarring discords blending.

O bells of God! ring on our souls
To grander action nerving,
Till all our days are Christmas days
Of loving and of serving!

HOW A CAT PLAYED SANTA CLAUS.

BY FAITH WYNNE.

"Now, Kitty, if you don't behave, I'll not read you this Christmas story at all," said Mamie Taylor, with a paper spread out on one chubby little palm, while with the other round arm she was trying to hold her kitten so that the big yellow eyes could follow her own bright brown ones over the page; but Kitty would much rather have been after an empty spool that she had just rolled under a chair.

"You are not following the golden rule at all, Puss, don't you know?—

'To do to others as I wish
That they should do to me,
Will make me gentle, kind, and good,
As children ought to be;'

and kittens the same as folks, of course. Now, suppose when you are trying to amuse me I should scratch and growl, would you like it? Now please be quiet while I read you this story about 'Dame Black and her Bob-tailed Cat.'

"'Once there lived in a poor, humble cabin, at the edge of a dark, dark woods, an old white-haired woman, with no companion but a cat, and so poor that many a day she would have nothing to eat; but whenever she had food she shared it with "Stumpy," who had lived with her for several years. Stumpy was a poor, half-starved cat, that had been taken to the woods in a bag and dropped there, with no thought whether it lived or died,—a cruel way that some folks have of disposing of cats that they do not want.

"'One Christmas Eve, when the snow was several inches deep around Dame Black's cabin and the poor woman was crouching over a low fire, thinking of other Christmas Eves in the long ago that were happier and merrier than this, and wishing that she could hear the sound of a voice to break the painful stillness, suddenly there came a low, pitiful mew at the door. The good woman looked out, and saw on the step a poor forlorn-looking kitten, bob-tailed, and very thin; but as soon as she called it in, it began to purr and rub up against her in a most affectionate and grateful manner.

"'The poor woman was right glad to have even such a companion, and shared her scant meal with the little stranger, who took up her abode there right willingly; and Dame Black smiled to herself at her strange Christmas gift. But Stumpy thought she had the best part of the gift when she was offered the home; and as animals are more grateful than we know, she was always watching to express her gratitude; and the opportunity came another Christmas, when still harder times had knocked at the cabin door, and the poor little dame was crippled with rheumatism, and every one seemed to have forgotten her.

"'"I reckon we 'll starve together, poor Stumpy," she said, as the cat sprang upon her lap, and looked wistfully into her face; but the little creature began to purr cheerily and folded her paws and fell into a reverie.

"'By and by she jumped down and crept through an aperture left for her to go out and in, and was gone so long the poor woman sighed and wondered if Stumpy too had deserted her, when, lo! she appeared suddenly before her with a young rabbit in her mouth, which she laid, with a kindly "mew," at her old friend's feet.

"'"My good little Santa Claus," said the little dame, as she hobbled off to prepare her dainty meal, which Stumpy shared with great satisfaction.'"

Scattered Words.

Teachers' Department.

CHARITABLE WORK IN SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

[There could be no better time than this Christmas-tide for our teachers to be thinking over new plans for making their classes, and the whole Sunday-school, active workers, after the example and in the spirit of him "who went about doing good." We have therefore added to our columns of Christmas reading-matter this paper, which discusses the methods of our Sunday-school charities. — EDITOR.]

AT the November meeting of the Sunday-School Union, Mr. E. A. Whitman presented a valuable paper on Charitable Work in the Sunday-school. He said, in substance, that the real aim of Sunday-school teaching is to set before each child his individual responsibility in view of the misery, poverty, and unhappiness of many of his fellow-beings. What is he or she going to do about it? Our religion is of little value save as it enables us to answer this question. A knowledge of the best methods of charity, if not imparted in the home, becomes the duty of the Sunday-school. Charity to-day consists not so much in giving to the poor as in doing for them; it is of greater avail when done through organized action than by individual effort, and it is not to be left to women and priests, but must be done by men in the world. A child cannot begin this work at too early an age; he must not be left to plan what he will do when he is a man; he must be asked what he can now do, and therefore must do.

The school or class that goes on plodding over lessons, without practical application, has lost its opportunity. The feeling in child or man that he is doing enough is most demoralizing; he should be stimulated to large achievements. The first method of charity that suggests itself is the direct giving of money by children by the regular passing of the Sunday-school box. This is attended with danger, since it gives the idea that charity means money, — that if a child has contributed a cent, he has done his part towards reducing poverty and unhappiness. It also tends to make the child of poor parents feel that since he can give no money he can do nothing. Be careful, therefore, to teach that giving is but a lame substitute for doing. Never should money thus raised be devoted to the support of the Sunday-school, which is the legitimate charge of the church. But there are other ways of bestowing charity; and most important is it to teach children that all their lives must not be given up to paid service, — that a certain amount of time should be kept for unpaid service, and they should he shown what that work is, and how it can be done. It would be well for each school to have a director of charities, who knows about the poor and is fertile in expedients for relief.

Mr. Whitman suggested various forms which this charitable work might take; among them, the providing of flowers for the Flower Mission by country children, the raising of window-plants by city children as gifts to poor and less favored children. In this work lie great possibilities. Another way of utilizing the sympathies and energies of children is by forming societies. The work they can do is varied. They can be the medium of services to the sick and aged, in reading to and visiting them, in lending and distributing books; in preparing articles for hospitals, scrap-books for the Children's Hospitals, etc. In his own school they had, by means of a little society, helped in the furnishings of the Cambridge Hospital, — the smaller ones hemming towels, the older ones doing things requiring more skill.

If children are to be taught that charitable undertakings must be on a large scale in order to be successful, the financial aid given by the Sunday-school must be counted not by tens but by hundreds of dollars. No school in the Sunday-School Union should be content that does not annually raise for charitable work from one to five hundred dollars. A Fair is the most successful method of raising large sums, and is not of very much trouble to the older people who necessarily have the management of it. This method, which in grown people may seem to be a folly, is wholly appropriate to children. By a May party in Mr. Whitman's School, which was, in fact, a sale by children and for children, though their elders were cordially invited, $400 had been raised. Such a scheme provides for the service of girls rather than boys, for whom it is much more difficult to map out work. But the share boys can assume is always faithfully done in the Cambridge Sunday-school, and in this age of industrial training boys' work will grow to greater proportions.

Children, as well as grown people, like to see some tangible result from their work. This is one secret of the success of the Children's Mission; and should any school desire a specific object to which to devote its charitable fund, it might well bear in mind the value of a country home to this Mission, and remember that it is in their power to bring such into existence in a permanent form.

A TEACHERS' SUPPLEMENT.

WE shall print a four-page Supplement to EVERY OTHER SUNDAY for Jan. 8, 1888, which will contain a full report of Dr. Peabody's two Lecture-talks on "How to teach the Old Testament" and "How to teach the New Testament." This Supplement will not be sent with each copy of the paper, as it is designed for the use of our Sunday-school teachers; but we shall send enough copies of it to each school where the paper is taken to enable every teacher to have a copy. If any other persons wish for copies, they can obtain them, free of charge, by addressing a postal card to the Unitarian Sunday-School Society, 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

MRS. WELLS' NEW MANUAL.

A NEW and exceedingly valuable book, prepared by Mrs. Kate Gannett Wells, has just been published by the Sunday-School Society. Its title is "Outlines for Conversation and Study." It contains 49 double pages of text and 12 chart-pages. These charts show how the blackboard may be used as an aid in teaching moral and religious truths. Taken in connection with the Lessons they help the teacher or parent to *think out* the subject that is talked about, to make a clear analysis of its meaning, to illustrate it by simple and common analogies, and to apply it to every-day duties in the various relations of life. This is the first attempt in any book to show our teachers how to awaken a lively interest in religious topics in the minds of the young. A teacher who should do no more than repeat these lessons just as Mrs. Wells has written them out, would find that both teacher and pupils had gained a new conception of Sunday-school teaching. But the object of the book is rather to stimulate the teacher to "go and do likewise," — to make, that is, her own analyses of the thought, and with her class go to work in some such method as that of Mrs. Wells to make of the Sunday half-hour a *grand good time*, — a delightful excursion into the fresh pastures of living truths. Parents as well as teachers can get useful hints and suggestions from these pages. The book is the fruit of actual teaching, — work done with a class of young ladies in the Arlington Street Sunday-school in Boston, who were studying to fit themselves to become Sunday-school teachers. The price of the volume is only 25 cents, and we hope the book will find its way into the hands of *all* our teachers.